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Aubrey Hall to Joan Hall, 30 November 1947

30.11.47

Dear Joannee

Found later I hadn't posted you the Magazine containing "The unsinkable Mrs Brown", have done so by last mail. Please return to me after perusal, she is so unique a [?figure] I want others to enjoy her. If you have time to read it, the account of a hurricane encountered by a large well found freight steamer in the Carribean is first class writing, it almost ranks with Conrad's "Typhoon". In a book of I think Gertrude Atherton's "The Conqueror" there is an equally fine description of a hurricane on one of the West Indies Islands, St Kitts if I remember rightly, it is written around Hamilton, an illegitimate born in the W.I. whose force of character and ability raised him to be Washington's right hand man in the War of Independence.

With this am posting you also an *Argus* Supplement containing a pseudo scientific article upon Rabbits, somewhat in the Parker style together with a Pocket Book Magazine containing an article on Night Owls that will appeal to you. I don't want either of these latter returned.

Speaking of hurricanes recalls old memories. I was born in Perth at Grandfather Geo Lazenby's home in Murray St in 1871 & went to Cossack for the first time in 1874 in the Schooner *Clarence Packet*, 54 tons, Capt Miles master, a time expired Convict & father of Geo Miles M.L.C. as Mate of a Ship he carried out the orders of the Captain in placing a recalcitrant Seaman in a barrel, [?heading ?leading] the barrel up, driving spikes to protrude within & having it rolled to & fro on the deck until the seaman died. The Captain was hanged & Miles transported for obeying the *un-lawful* orders of the Captain. However he was a fine seaman & commanded vessels on the W A coast for many years.

I can remember him quite well, tall & lean with a long grey beard & a very crooked leg caused I think by a fall from aloft. Although I was only

3 I can remember the shape & color of the *Clarence Packet* & details of our embarkation, your grandfather W.S.H. was pearling later on but at that time had purchased the Store & Stock of a man named Crouch & we lived there whilst [?our] permanent home was being built.

From then on I was [?through] every local hurricane until we moved to Wooramel & with that knowledge would say that the writer in the magazine forwarded, in Typhoon & The Conqueror all had actual experience of hurricanes.

In about 1878 when W.S.H. had been engaged in pearling with naked divers for some years, he had to go to Perth for an operation, he was only away 6 weeks, yet during that brief absence his pearling vessel the cutter *Industry*, abt 15T became a total wreck in Flying Foam, snapped her anchor chains, was cast up over the edge of a low cliff in the harbour & split neatly into two halves from Stem to Stern.

No lives lost as all hands had made the vessel as secure as they possibly could & gone ashore in the early stages of the hurricane.

Also his youngest child a baby boy had died whilst he was away, for want of Cow's milk, we had a Cow in milk in Roebourne but couldn't get it to Cossack, brother E & I too little. I can in some measure gauge your Grandmother's tragic condition, a sick babe, a sick & absent husband & the pearling boat wrecked. Although our home was well built & lined, the water drove through so heavily we had to bore holes in the floor to get rid of it.

A barque the *Mariano* was smashed up completely & fragments of her piled up along the whole front of the town.

Then it was that your Grandfather took employment with his old friend Fredk Pearse, father of Mrs Rolland & Mrs Sam Gillam of Gabyon, there he & your Grandmother worked & saved for some years until he secured another pearling boat the schooner *Ethel* in partnership with a seafaring man named O'Grady, this would be round about 1882.

I can remember my mother saying to my Dad in her gentle voice  
"Shakespeare don't go into partnership with O'Grady, he is a bad man".  
But O'Grady was a smooth tongued Irishman and my Father obstinate &  
headstrong, so away they went, the Dad was well & favorably known to  
the Abos in Exmouth Gulf & had no difficulty in engaging a crew of  
naked divers.

About half way through the season (Oct – March) he together with a  
number of other pearlers, encountered what was known as the  
Yamerdory hurricane, one of the worst blows ever known on the N.W.  
coast, the fleet took shelter in Cool-goo-ra Creek, but the whole Creek  
was submerged & the vessels blown on shore, one boat the *Adela* was  
dismasted & turned completely upside down, the *Ethel* was lifted on the  
waves & dashed down upon the mangrove trees until the heavy limbs  
came right through the hull, she filled & all hands took to the water, this  
was at 8 a.m. they all reached the shore except O'Grady's son a lad of [?  
15 ?18] who was drowned. My Dad, a powerful man & a good swimmer,  
dragged himself onto land at 1 p.m. almost unconscious.

John Brockman was stranded nearby with a 40T cutter the *Sarah*,  
Carson Charlie that fat white bearded old Abo in Carnarvon was one of  
Brockman's divers & saw my Dad land. The *Ethel* after sinking was  
carried on to a marsh & my Dad came into Cossack took out material, a  
shipwright & hands, made temporary repairs, dug a canal, extricated  
the vessel & brought her to Cossack for permanent repair &  
permanently abandoned pearling.

Meantime he arranged for O'Grady & the divers to work off another  
vessel that was not fully manned. O'Grady was reputed to have found a  
very valuable pearl & secreted it, at the end of the season he went  
South, bought the *Clarence Packet*, went trading, killed a Chinaman in  
his crew & was sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.

Mother Constance & Marg experienced a mild hurricane on Jarman  
Island, ditto a heavy one at Satirist when Samson Jetty was blown away,  
you wisely timed your arrival to miss these events.

Love

Dad

P.S. Afterthought to the wreck of the *Industry*.

The *Mariano* willy willy was before Christmas, this blow was milder in the Flying Foam area & the *Industry* was unharmed. Early in the New Year, when the Barometer was again falling dangerously & the *Industry* taking shelter in Flying Foam anchorage, the schooner *Rosette* appeared on the scene x Fremantle, deeply laden with supplies for the Roebourne District & a number of N W passengers aboard. Val Hester was in charge of the *Industry*, he boarded the *Rosette* & told the master of the *Mariano* hurricane, his reply was, there never occurs two hurricanes in one season, so this falling glass isn't serious, so he decided to anchor in shelter until the wind moderated. In the morning following, the *Rosette* was seen to have foundered at her anchors, not a soul saved.

Abo divers later salvaged the mails and your Grandmother received Perth letters & a parcel containing a silk dress she had sent to Perth to be modernised, the latter little the worse for its ordeal, all this happened whilst your Grand dad was ill in Perth.